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December 2019

Volume 1, Issue 11

**18** Peggy Apple

The Scene once had a call-sign, and Peggy Apple picks up the mic for us.

**22** OP Callaghan

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# 'OFD' Playing the RRX

*With the determination of a Boston street upbringing, Bryan McPherson weilds the power of social media like a baseball bat.*



Photo by Chris Besaw

■ Bryan McPherson's music videos can be found on his YouTube channel.

By Rob Smittix

**R****RX:** First off we are stoked that you squeezed the Capital Region of New York into your tour. Last time I saw you live was at Upstate Concert Hall, opening up for Dropkick Murphys. I know a little of the back story behind your history with Dropkick but for our readers, can you explain a little on how you got to know these guys?

**BMcP:** I'm stoked to be

coming back. I grew up in Boston and came up in "the scene" of the acoustic crowd and also the Boston Punk crowd. Years ago, word got around and someone turned DKM on to some of my tunes and I was invited to open up for them at their St. Pat's shows in 2008 - ish. That was followed by a couple of tours a few years after that and eventually all around North America and Europe. Great band and great guys. Had a blast touring around with them and playing for their fans.

**RRX:** I know earlier this year you released "King's Corner," an album of some older unreleased tunes you have had. I enjoyed the album very much. I also know you have been talking about new material you've been writing and I believe you have even stated that you've recently written the best song you've ever done. Can you tell us a bit about your new music?

**BMcP:** Oh very cool. You are up to date on the trash I talk on

*Continued on Page 4...*

## PEGGY APPLE

WBQK 104 FM was a place of magic and energy, and Peggy Apple was keeper of the grimoire.

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## OP CALLAGHAN

Drummer and singer OP Callaghan speaks fondly of Decadence, and the peerage of local rock music.

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Facebook ha-ha. “Kings Corner” came out in the spring on vinyl, cd, and digitally on the streaming sites. It’s mostly songs from a forgotten demo of the first songs I ever wrote back in the day. Dorchester Street corner songs essentially. I took the same spirit I used in that first recording, i.e. me, a microphone, a computer, a room and made a record of these songs revamped reworked and re-recorded. Just so happens I have better gear and know-how these days! I also shot with Jason Stone, directed, and edited a music video for “Ghost of My Hometown” The only “new song” on the album. That was a wild experience. We shot it all around my old neighborhood in

Dorchester. You can scope that on my YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/bryanmcperson>.

That being said, I recently wrote a song that I think is very interesting and sums up the last seven years of my life on the road. The scope and production I have in mind, I have yet to sort out. I do know that after this current tour I am on for “Kings Corner.” I will be focusing on making another record. I have more songs than I know what to do with! Maybe a triple record? Keep an eye out for another crowd sourcing campaign. Without my crowd I do not exist as a recording artist, at least on being able to release physical albums. They are pretty expensive to make and distribute. My people have helped me get down the

road in so many ways and have allowed me to create music on a scale that blows me away. Much thanks and cred to all of my backers!

**RRX:** Obviously, your music has caught attention because of your lyrical content. This is why you have such loyal fans but it’s also why you have experienced censorship for lack of a better word. For example being banned from playing Disney owned venues. Which I imagine isn’t that bad of an achievement. What are your thoughts on how people interpret your words? Thought provoking is how I would describe it.

**BMcP:** I think people need to relax and stop trying to ban people’s minds and speech. It’s absurd to me. As a free thinker I do not need a government or

a business or an idealist telling me what I am allowed to think or say. Personally I would like to know who the a-holes are, so let them talk and sound like fools and crawl under whatever rock they came out from. Disney? Never cared for them, not even as a child. Their films are mostly trash and poison. Being banned by them was a lifetime achievement award. Most recently Facebook has banned my music from my Bandcamp page because it “violates community standards” they have yet to address my complaint or inquiry. I am guessing that their algorithm uncovered some unsavory truths of the world in my lyrics and deemed it “bad” for the community which is ironic since my Facebook community is made up of 90% people



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I know from my music! So they are censoring a community YOU SIGNED UP FOR. I'm encouraging everyone who follows what I do to join my mailing list, so if anything happens down the road, we can stay in touch. I do a monthly newsletter, <http://www.bryanmcperson.com/ mailing-list>

**RRX:** It seems like you are always on tour. I know that you like to explore the areas you visit and that you like to do photography while on tour. What is a day in the life of Bryan McPherson like?

**BMcP:** I'm in Dartmouth Nova Scotia right now at Port City Cafe with The Earl of Halifax on the water in beautiful Alderney Landing before the gig tonight. Played in Halifax last night. Some days I drive all day and then run into a venue to sing then drive again. Some days I wake up in a Walmart parking lot in Utah or a campground in Montana or in a motel in a far off place or desert and go exploring. Sometimes I

stay in cities, but I usually try to get out of the big ones as soon as possible. Too much trouble and too costly and too intense. I appreciate the wide open spaces and natural beauty of the world. I'm not so into traffic and seven-dollar coffees so much anymore. The cities are a different thing these days. Not much grit. Not much truth. Seems like they are turning them into the suburbs I grew up on the outside of. Some days I have to cross borders and they give me the 3rd degree. Some days they just wave me in. Ya never know. Y'all can check out my photos at <https://www.etsy.com/ shop/McPhersonRoad> or on Instagram at @mcperson.road

**RRX:** I am in a band myself and I constantly find myself saying that if I wasn't married with kids it would be a hell of a lot easier to just jump in the van and hit the road. So, for a guy like yourself, who I imagine is around my age (give or take), do you ever feel like you're missing out on what

would be considered a normal lifestyle? I guess the same way I feel like I am missing out on experiences like your own.

**BMcP:** Yup! The grass is always greener that's for sure. This life is more challenging than a lot of people imagine. The miles, long days and nights, uncertainty, automotive trouble, lack of security, long months away from home; all that stuff can wear ya down and when things don't go as expected, a calmer less mobile life gets more attractive but typically I get restless and the road calls me again. Like anything else it is what I make of it. It has its ups and downs, peaks and valleys. I try to just remember I'm on the ride of my life, no matter what the current circumstances are!

You can catch Bryan McPherson live at RadioradioX.com studios 35D Saratoga Ave Waterford on Dec. 3rd from 6-9pm with special guests: Colin Moran and The Tradition. Hosted by yours truly!

■ "Originally From Dorchester," McPherson has traveled the world.

Photo by Wes Rollend



**Art Fredette**  
Publisher

**Liam Sweeny**  
Editor-In-Chief  
Creative Director

**Ralph Renna**  
Music Editor

**Kit Haynes**  
Associate Editor

**Dick Beach**  
Staff Geek

## Contributors

*Rob Smittix*

*Debora Bump*

*Sassy Auburn*

*Fred Aseel*

*Jeff Spauling*

*George Glass*

## Contact

35D Saratoga Avenue,  
Waterford, NY 12188  
(518) 326-1673

[info@radioradioX.com](mailto:info@radioradioX.com)

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# LENSMANSHIP: AN ACTION OF WRITING IN PICTURES

By Stephanie J. Bartick

I recently had an opportunity to catch Kilashandra, an energetic five piece Irish rock and blues jam band based out of Albany, NY O'Slattery's Irish Restaurant and Pub in Delmar, NY. I wasn't quite sure what to expect, but I thought it had to be Celtic music.

Although they do play a mix of driving Irish rock, also thrown in are traditional tunes with a spin, some sweeter ballads, and a few select non Irish gems. I was impressed!

With band members Chris Gil - lead vocals and guitar, Paul Graves - lead vocals and guitar, Gregory Engel - fiddle and backing vocals, Brad James - holding down the bass

And Denis Kelly - lead vocals and banging the drums, they offered a great mix of rocking tunes. The place was packed! There wasn't much room for dancing due to the huge crowd, however, you can see the fans were enjoying what they heard!

After the show, I asked Paul Graves some questions:

**RRX:** First off, the name. Why? How did you come up with Kilashandra?

**PG:** The name Kilashandra comes from a village of the same name in County Cavan Ireland.

We chose it from a song we learned when we first started out, "Come Out Ye Black & Tans" and we spell it differently because we like to mix things up.

**RRX:** When did the band get together?

**PG:** Our original group of four joined up January 2017 for the Watertown Irish Festival and it really took off from there. A little rearrangement through the years brings us to our current group consisting of: Chris Gil, Paul Graves, Gregory Engel, Brad James, and Denis Kelly.

What I liked about Kilashandra, was that the band likes to take a whole band approach to most of their songs, and they highlight each musician's talents as much as possible throughout their setlists. It's a shared stage. This is a big reason they all love playing together and also why the crowd enjoys their shows. There are no DIVAS. From Chris' and Paul's' amazing vocals, to Brads heartbeat-like bass, Dennis non-stop high energy drumming, and the quick -paced talent of Gregory on fiddle, they truly are a band of equals.

The styles you might hear when attending one of their shows are those of The

Waterboys, Aslan, Bagatelle, Flogging Molly, The Saw Doctors and Van Morrison. But don't be surprised if you hear The Band, Lou Reed, Derek Trucks Band and more from their ever-growing selection.

You can see Kilashandra at the following venues and dates.

The Blackthorne in Durham on 11/23  
The Rustic Barn 1/11

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# On the Other Side of Questions

By Dick Beach

*Variety is the spice of life, and reporter and anchor Benita Zahn keeps her time well-seasoned.*

**B**y way of full disclosure, Benita Zahn and I have known each other a few more years than either of us would prefer to acknowledge. Reporter, anchor, actress, singer, athlete and complete force of nature, Benita seems' to be everywhere. She slowed down for a minute.

**RRX:** Let's start before you arrived in the Capital Region. Tell us a bit about from where you hail – your childhood, family; things that were memorable from your childhood.

**BZ:** I grew up on Long Island. Loved the beaches and couldn't wait to escape. I was the kid that would look out the window and knew there was a whole world out there and I wanted to get there. I listened to AM radio – that scratchy sound that was a clarion call – there was glamour and excitement and discovery. I love the beach, and still do. I have to go every year. I would go to the beach when I got my license and had to go to clear the cobwebs out to get to the next week to put life in some perspective.

**RRX:** Was journalism your thought as you headed to college? And if not, how did that happen?

**BZ:** No, I was born asking questions. I was annoying asking questions. How do we manage to fit in and I can recall as a



Photo Provided

■ Aside from the news, Benita Zahn is active in theater and singing.

kid, I was watching a movie about WW2 with my mother and I was asking a million questions. My mother said, "if you ask another question, I am sending you out of the room". I was ruining the movie for her. I complained that I didn't know what happened.

In the 11th grade I wrote a paper, that there is no such thing as the present. There is only presentness. That is the moment when the future becomes the past.

**RRX:** So how did you get here?

**BZ:** Some people map out their lives. I put up my sail.

**RRX:** You put up your sail, and it sent you to the Capital Region.

**BZ:** I was working for WGBB on Long Island, the news powerhouse at the time, and Cablevision before it became big. There were money issues at Cablevision and they disbanded the newsroom. I knew I had to do

broadcast tv as cable was not what it is now. I took two interviews, one was here. My mom died when I was 27 and I stayed here.

Albany has been very good to me.

I was an assignment editor, and not many really want that job long term, so I went into the news director and I said to him, "put me on the street or I am outta here". A more senior person was

*Continued on Page 10...*



*Continued from Page 9.*

offered the new noon news program, and they wanted no part of it. So, then they put me on the noon news as anchor. A news consultant came in. He said to the news director – “get her under contract.”

**RRX:** Outside of work – you are involved in a lot of stuff – you are an active runner, a singer, an actress and lord knows’ what else. Let’s talk a bit about the music and theatre. Like many of us, we do it for the rush – describe what it feels like when you are performing.

**BZ:** To me it’s a connection – a connection with the audience. I love the ability to take you from where you are and free you from your worries. Give you a break. If I am really doing my work, it is

an escape for the audience. When the audience is in the moment, I have achieved my goal. I have said many times, when I finish a performance, and do a curtain call, it is my denouement. I have helped you escape for a moment.

**RRX:** One local project you do is The Singing Anchor’s – I’ve had the pleasure of seeing this in person – how much fun is that?

**BZ:** It’s a lot of work – then it is a lot of fun. This is not slap dash. We have a lot of fun. Now it is side by side with Jerry Gretzinger.

**RRX:** If you had to pick one – and in this case you do – what is your favourite musical, and why?

**BZ:** *Company*. I played Susan, and what I really want to play now is JoAnne. What I love, which is why it was not

successful, is that it was not a book musical. It was uncomfortable. It was about divorce, friendly divorce. It was on the cutting edge.

There have been countless studies about that show. People write their theses about that show. *(As a writers’ note: I performed in Company many years ago. And it is, perhaps, more relevant today than ever)*

**RRX:** Not that you weren’t busy enough, but you added a doctorate to your life. How did health reporting and the topic of bioethics in particular become a focus?

**BZ:** Wow, this is interesting. I had to do a lot online. My schedule made that necessary. If they had had a Masters of Public Health, or Nutrition, I’d have

done one of those. Into my inbox comes this thing from the Alden March Bioethics Institute, and it looked interesting.

And it caught in my sails.

It resonated and I began exploring it. It changed the focus of health reporting when I needed to do that. It’s not all disease of the week. It has made me amplify my focus.

**RRX:** Okay, a final question, as is my practice. What is something people likely don’t know and that you would like to say as a comment about you, life, or the world in general?

**BZ:** That is broad. I read once, I think it is a Chinese proverb, not to use an axe to kill a fly on the forehead of a friend. People need to remember that.



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# Drinking During the Holidays

By Fred Aseel

December 5, 1933 the 21st Amendment to the US Constitution was ratified, repealing the 18th Amendment and bringing an end to the national prohibition of alcohol in America – just in time for the holiday season of that era.

Now, the sociable nature of the holiday season gives us tons of reasons to drink, and not all of them are happy. Binge drinking during the holidays is anything but merry. So many family members and friends under one roof can lead to arguments, drama and resentment and often adding alcohol only fuels the repressed fires. For a number of people, the holidays are a time of loneliness and stress and adding alcohol only drives the depression into a downward spiral. Economic pressures to buy something can lead to financial trouble and adding alcohol can lead to bad online shopping choices. Further, with so much traveling between Black-out Wednesday (aka the night before Thanksgiving) and New Year's Eve, alcohol related accidents increase 33% in comparison to the rest of the year.

Why do we put so much pressure on ourselves to have an “ideal” holiday and then drink down the disappointment when the few weeks at the end of the year don't live up to those unreasonable expectations? Do we hope

to recreate a holiday of the past where things seemed more magical, or a time where we were surrounded by lost loved ones? Are we trying to numb a suppressed pain that is pushing to the surface or are we adding liquid courage to say those words we have practiced in our mind for so long but feared vocalizing?

No matter what the reason you decided you needed to drink this holiday season, remember the key words in that sentence: you decided. So, this holiday season “decide” to make the season about you – which is very ironic during a season known for giving and sharing. However, it is also a season of love, joy and happiness and you won't find those things by ignoring your own mental and physical health in order to bake another three dozen cookies, or buy the perfect gift for your third cousin once removed who you haven't spoke to in years or by disrupting your normal personal routine in order to fit in caroling and two office holiday parties. You will only be able to be giving, sharing and available to others, without resentment and anger, when you practice extreme self-care and put yourself first.

I am not advocating for sober living, but I am encouraging you to practice moderation and not to drink to self-medicate. Be safe this holiday season and take care of yourself.



## UPCOMING EVENTS & LIVE MUSIC

- 12/05:** Open Mic with Izzy Singer - 7:30PM
- 12/06:** Raisinhead - 9PM
- 12/07:** Not Rightt - 8PM
- 12/08:** Second Sunday Bluegrass Jam - 6PM
- 12/13:** Big Fez and the Surfmatics - Surfin' Christmas Party aka Ugly Sweater and Outrageous Outfit Extravaganza! - 8PM
- 12/14:** Diva and the Dirty Boys - 8PM
- 12/19:** Open Mic with Kelly Maguire - 7:30PM
- 12/20:** DEAD AHEAD - 8PM
- 12/21:** Dandelion Wine - 8PM
- 12/24:** Sax-O-Claus 4PM (Closing 6PM Christmas Eve.)
- 12/26:** Masquerade Open Mic - 7:30PM
- 12/26:** Open Mic with Brian Kane - 7:30 PM
- 12/27:** The Lane Trio - 8PM
- 12/28:** The Snook Bros. - 8PM
- 12/31:** NYE Party with Soul Provider (more info online)
- 1/02:** Open Mic with Leslie Barkman - 7:30PM
- 1/03:** Brian Kane - 8PM

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# Albany's Best Kept Secret

*Living, Working and Inspiring: The Albany Barn provides a hidden home to the area's creatives.*

By Rob Smittix

Several weeks ago when you could still wear short sleeves at night, I found myself following the beat of tribal drums which led me to the corner of Second and North Swan Streets. Now decades ago if I said this same sentence you would assume I was trying to get myself into some trouble. But the neighborhood has made tremendous strides in the name of progress since then. This means a lot to me because my family is from here.

The welcoming drums summoned me to the entrance of The Albany Barn. That's funny it doesn't resemble a barn at all, in fact the building used to be the old St. Joseph's Academy. After massive renovations the one-time school was transformed into a Mecca for art, right here in Albany's Arbor Hill. How's that for improvement?

This was it, I finally made my way to The Barn's big annual anti-gala FUSION. For years I have heard about this event and I wasn't quite sure what to expect

so I did what any logical writer with press credentials would do and I got myself on the list. So first off the food presentation was an art display of its own. I can still feel the heat from those pork tacos, delicious and literally FIRE!

With a drink in both hands, I made the rounds to different art exhibits. Paintings and sculptures are everywhere. Being a so-called artist myself I was in my glory. Some of the artists have studios set up at The Barn and others actually live on the premises. Man, if I was single with no kids I would be first in line to get myself an apartment there. I can only imagine how inspiring it would be to be surrounded by artists all of time. Don't get me wrong my kid has a few pictures

still hanging on the fridge but you know what I mean.

So after my experience at FUSION, it dawned on me that there are still so many Capital Region residents that have no idea that such an amazing place exists. The Albany Barn is truly the best kept secret in town but with the amount of talent coming from



Photo Provided.

Artist Alex Waters at the Albany Barn anti-gala FUSION.





this place it would almost be impossible to not learn of its whereabouts eventually.

When it comes to networking The Barn is certainly a safe bet. I mingled and rubbed elbows with artists, musicians, producers, promoters, writers and did I mention the tacos? Still feeling it. Seriously all jokes aside, you've got to check this place out for yourself. I actually got to investigate myself and my findings were uncanny.

So picture this the place is packed solid with people and I noticed a door that lead me to the residential area. My curiosity got the best of me so I just kept strolling along. I am admiring the artwork on the walls and I came to a stairwell. I just love old buildings so I thought this should be fun; an adventure none the less. I found a doorway leading to a dingy basement area and I thought to myself, perhaps I shouldn't but where's the fun in that? I entered.

I am sure there was a light switch somewhere but for the life of me I couldn't locate it. After feeling around on the walls and coming up with cobwebbed hands, I decided to just use the

light on my phone. The room was illuminated and I kid you not when I turned around there was a ghostly woman standing five feet in front of me. To say I screamed loudly would be an understatement! Fortunately the music from the party was loud enough to mask my terror. The last time I ran that fast I was trying to outrun a train, I eventually jumped out of the way "Stand By Me" style. Anyway the point I am making is stay on the beaten path.

I had to share that now. Getting back to the story at hand. The Barn has been open since 2014 and the redevelopment of the abandoned school was made possible with the help of the city, the Housing Authority and was a result of the Rock2Rebuild project. Get this, Schenectady also has a Barn now, the Electric City Barn; I wonder what type of apparitions lurk in their basement.

For more information about the Albany Barn and upcoming events visit: [albanybarn.org](http://albanybarn.org)



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# THE SCENE IN THE SIGNAL

*During one of the most exciting times in the Capital Region music scene, WQBK radio personality Peggy Apple brought the listening world to their radios to join in.*



Photo by  
Stephen Lyon

By Liam Sweeny

**T**he air is electric. This is fact, and not the first stanza of poetry. There is no place anywhere on this blue-green marble where there is not the zinging and shooting of electromagnetic energy over you, near you and through you. It's not all bad, because some of it's carrying pretty damn good music. And we entrust a handful of people to pilot the cosmic rays that bring us our crooners, our beat-masters and our wailing saxophones. We call them DJs.

Peggy Apple presided over some of the last periods of terrestrial radio freedom.

Peggy Apple was a DJ on the legendary station once known as WQBK FM in Albany.

She presided over a pretty heady time in the Capital Region, from 1975 to 1986.

I sit down with Peggy Apple to discuss the proper way to bounce light off of vinyl.

**RRX:** You were with WQBK FM in Albany from 1975 – 1986, which, as I'm learning, was a real halcyon period in the Capital Region scene. There was a lot of infrastructure in terms of venues, bands, and WQBK was a part of that infrastructure. Were you able to tap into the local scene a much as you'd have liked to?

**PA:** Absolutely, the greatest part of working at WQBK-FM Q-104 was playing the local music. I particularly leaned toward more of the harder edge/punkish/

new age groups and that scene was exploding locally.

I was host of a new music show titled Exposure and I devoted an hour a week playing new music and local bands, for example, Blotto, Fear of Strangers/Units, OD, the A.D's, Excalibur, Mechanical Servants, The Morons, The Executives, Your Move; so many and that just names a few and I know I am missing a ton more. Plus we incorporated the local music in our individual shows. The area had a huge support from local clubs at that time, 288 Lark, Bogarts, Hulla-baloo, The Chateau Lounge, and of course, JB Scotts. It was not unheard of for local musicians to head over to our studios to drop off tapes for us to play.

**RRX:** Radio stations, with the exception of college stations, are businesses, with advertisers that pay them, and the station has to play what'll draw the most



listeners, even if you would've like to open people up to something a little more obscure. But did you have chances to do that at WQBK?

**PA:** Yes, WQBK-FM started out in Fall of 1975 with Jack Hopke playing long sets of incredible "progressive" music, (the name of the format in the mid-seventies); weaving Jazz, Folk, Oldies, Rock, and all sorts of new music together. The music told the story and with it, came a school of knowledge for the listener. You listened for the music and for the personality putting it all together. That person on the air was an artist in their own right; drawing you in as a listener and Q-104 was all about drawing you in. It was fun and exciting at the same time....an explosion of talent of all genres. With the exception of WRPI, no other station and certainly not a commercial station, was playing the variety of artists we were, and we definitely played the deeper tracks on some of the more well known artists. We were able to jump on a track weeks before it became so called popular. Everyone at the station had great ears and each had their personal favs that they were excited to turn each other onto. We were a little radio station back then, and we had a huge reputation in the industry of breaking out some incredible national artists.

**RRX:** You've said that your favorite era of the time you were there was the progressive rock era, so the very early eighties? How much of your fondness for that period was the music itself, and how much of it, do you think,

was the feel and the scene of that time?

**PA:** Well, at the risk of over-romanticizing those early days and my youth, it was certainly everything coming together, the exploding local scene, fantastic artists just hungry to play and have their music played and our fierce loyalty to playing this great non-homogenized music. All of us at WQBK became a family as you usually do when you have a group that ate, drank, and breathed radio and music. It was an appreciation for the artist, the sweat and exhilaration of playing stuff that spoke to us, every word - every note had a purpose. We left it to the other stations to pound hits in a five-hour rotation. Never would we repeat a song in a twenty-four period. there was too much good music to play, but as corporate radio started to emerge, the business side/ money side started to scramble for a majority of listeners...The station owners had no choice but to compete and start upping their game to hold on to listeners and advertisers. What did that mean to all of us on the air? It meant cutting out the "obscure" and mixing in the "hits" that usually some record executive decided needed airplay and exposure. It meant not talking as much on the air. You had to tighten it up baby, the times were changing. But in answer to your question, I was crazy fond of the whole thing.... Music, concerts, radio!

**RRX:** So, clearly, the music industry is unrecognizable now from what it was when you were on WQBK. But music, radio, and the industry are always changing;

even then they were different from just a couple of decades before. Do you still see glimmers of what you were doing when you spin the dial today?

**PA:** Seriously? In my opinion, only Radioradiox is holding on to that gold standard...I am hard pressed to find a station that manages with- no fear- of going back forty years and play a classic artist and mix that with someone from today. Different is an understatement. Sure, it is a niche audience, but I believe there are more of us out there that love this variety of artists and sound. I know I still love being guided down that road listening to someone choosing music that will expand my musical repertoire.

Satellite radio certainly attempts to imitate the old formats of AM/FM. It has its pros and cons. It presents itself as having a lot of choices and while it does have variety, I feel there is almost too much to choose from to some extent. Still, though, I listen.

One thing for sure, radio is a lot cleaner today- sound wise- that is...no scratches or skipping (haha) you got from vinyl days... or even lifting the needle off the record playing and putting it on a totally different track, yes that happened a couple of times.

Back then, the audience had an instant live connection, but it was only through the phone that listeners kept in touch. Q104 was live, and spontaneous. Even the commercials were fun to do and listen to. Plus artists coming to town would come in and chat. (U-2 came up to the station on

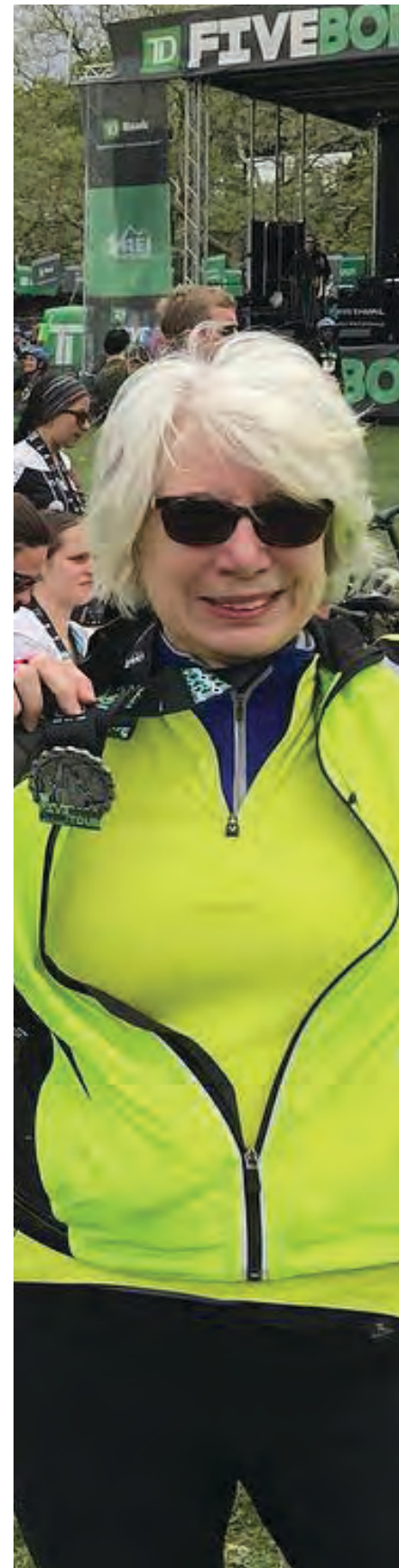


Photo Provided.

*Continued on Page 32...*

 Peggy Apple



# A Visit From St. Nicholas ('Twas the Night Before Christmas)

*First published anonymously in the Troy Sentinel, 1823.*

TROY

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;  
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;  
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,  
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow  
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny

with a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;  
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!  
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"  
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;  
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,  
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.  
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;  
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.  
His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,  
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;  
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;  
He had a broad face and a little round belly,  
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;  
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;  
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle,  
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,  
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night."



Photo by  
Amy Modesti

# Heart Beats and Fills

*From music to medicine, from the Decadent Royals to the Chris Busone Band, singer and drummer OP Callaghan sets the pace.*

By Liam Sweeney

**W**hen a band hits, when it really hits, you can't hear the singer; you hear the song. You don't hear the drummer; you feel the beat. Musicians, at their best, transcend the craft of manipulating vocal chords or power chords as individuals sitting in a room practicing, so that they can come together and transcend their roles, in order that they, the band, that singular unit, may perform a much greater role in the minds of all who listen.

OP Callaghan. Singer for the Decadent Royals. Drummer for the Chris Busone Band, veteran of countless bands. Gunnery Sergeant of jam sessions. Also, physician, caretaker of his fellow human. Sworn enemy of apples (maybe.)

I sit down with OP and we discuss the use of the Decadent Royal "we."

**RRX:** In July, we interviewed Chris Busone, which you know, because currently you are laying down the beat for him. But you have really been on the opposite end of things as the frontman for the Decadent Royals. Having spent time being "behind the hardware," do you see the role of

frontman differently that when you started out?

**OPC:** I started playing drums when I was 7 years old; so I'm used to sitting in the back! I played in bands through high school, and played in a hardcore band called Albany Style when I was 17. That band was my introduction to "band life". It was a great experience, that allowed me to play on stage with some of my idols, including Black Flag, 7 Seconds, Agnostic Front and Corrosion Of Conformity. In college, I learned a few guitar chords and started writing songs. The band I played in during college was a classic rock band, who were kind enough to let me "sing" one song. As a drummer in 1313 Mockingbird Lane, they let me write a song for the album. I decided that I wanted to sing in a band, and answered an ad in a local magazine looking for a "front man". I met Norman Kee and DC Hannay, and The Decadent Royals were born. I loved singing in a band, and loved The Royals, but we ran our course. I'm lucky to still be involved in the local scene as a drummer, and I love sitting in the back. There's much less pressure!

**RRX:** You and Chris have been in the scene long enough to see pictures of your old flyers on



social media “memories” groups. We do our best to explore your world behind the stage lights, but ultimately, the scene is for the people who show up at the door. Do you have any cool “fan” stories? Or maybe “not-so-fan” stories?

**OPC:** I would say the best “stories” are not so much stories, but consistent support from the local scene. Other bands, players, etc. The Decadent Royals always had local celebs like Tony Perino, Chris Busone, Melanie Kahler, and Joe Mele playing on our records, and making us sound good on tape. Don Wilcock, Greg Haymes, John Rodat, Martin Benjamin, and Buck Malen made us look good in print! Also, fans and friends like Doug Nash have always been there for us! We were especially lucky, because club owners like Tess Collins, Howard Glassman, Charlene Shortsleeve, Ted Etoll and Greg Bell booked us! I wrote for the Source magazine, and Miriam Impellizzeri helped me do the layout for the first Royals album, *The New Groovy*. We were given so much help along the way.

**RRX:** One of the great things about talking with people with a long band history is that I see patterns that hold throughout the years. Also, it can be frustrating, because I want to be wowed too by something I’d never heard before. So you can pick singing or drumming; what is some weird or astonishing thing that you think few people realize?

**OPC:** I think that singers have a more difficult place, due to your voice being your instrument. Heat, cold, illness, and stress all



Photo by Amy Modesti

■ Callaghan notes that healthcare is tough for musicians.

wreak havoc on the voice! The nice thing about being a singer, is that you pack light. Leather pants and a tamborine, and you’re ready to go! Being in a band can be terribly frustrating at times. It’s a family dynamic, and when you’re busy, you spend more time with the band than your family. Personality differences, stress, and “bad” gigs all affect your band relationship. The Decadent Royals were no exception, and we eventually broke

up due to my issues, both personal and band related. Some of the choices I made at the time, I still regret to this day, as it cost me a friendship as well as my band.

**RRX:** I lived under a rock for decades when it came to local music; I’ve really been catching up with this gig. But even I knew Decadent Royals. You were the singer and songwriter. Decadent Royals epitomized something that a lot of local bands we’ve interviewed have, like a “rust-belt

defiance?” What would you call it, if not that?

**OPC:** Defiance for sure! We had a chip on our shoulder from the beginning. There were no other bands like us in the local scene when we started. Grunge and metal were big, and rock-n-roll was not. We found other like-minded groups in New York, Boston, and Buffalo. Locally, most of the bands were jam bands, metal, or college rock oriented. Thankfully, we had The Staziaks, Super 400, and Chris Busone locally! Our first gigs were opening for Henry McFerran’s band, China White. He helped us out so much with gigs, encouragement, and even roadied for us. He was one of a kind. At the end of the day, The Decadent Royals were fans of rock-n-roll, and that’s what we played. Defiantly!!! Later on, bands like Black Cat Elliot, The Erotics, and Acoustic Trauma shared their stage with The Royals. We eventually started playing with national acts, and I can honestly say that they were all great to us. John Popper, Ben Harper, The Barenaked Ladies, and Shooter Jennings come to mind, and too many NYC bands to mention!

**RRX:** Musicians, artists and performers are superheroes in the sense that they have alter egos, i.e. jobs. You are a physician; you’re the healer of every quest. But seriously, you see a lot of the hard living that goes on in music. Did that inspire you to medicine? And if you could drill one thing into other players health-wise, now’s your shot.

*Continued on Page 24...*



*Continued from Page 23*

**OPC:** Playing in bands certainly inspired my career choice to go into medicine and become a physician assistant. Most musicians and artists don't have health insurance, and it's a hard life; with the travel, meals on the road, exposure to the elements as well as tons of people, it certainly predisposes you to more illness. We had friends who would put off going to the doctor, and eventually get sicker and have to be hospitalized. Then, they come out with a huge bill, and benefit shows were needed to help them out. I knew that I had a better shot to help with a career in medicine, than giving advice from the stage! My best advice, is "everything in moderation!" I've

made some really great musician friends through being in a band, and even some in medicine!

**RRX:** We're starting to see more recognition of the local scene. We're sponsoring a local scene show Johnny Morse is putting out, and it's a blast. And not just us, when you look at sites like Nippertown, who've been covering the scene for years, the momentum feels like it's positive and forward. Do you think it's nostalgia purely, or something more?

**OPC:** Nostalgia may have something to do with it, as there seemed to be more bands, more places to play, and more people out at the shows back in the days. Pre-internet, the clubs were packed, even on a Monday or Tuesday night! The local scene has always been supportive of

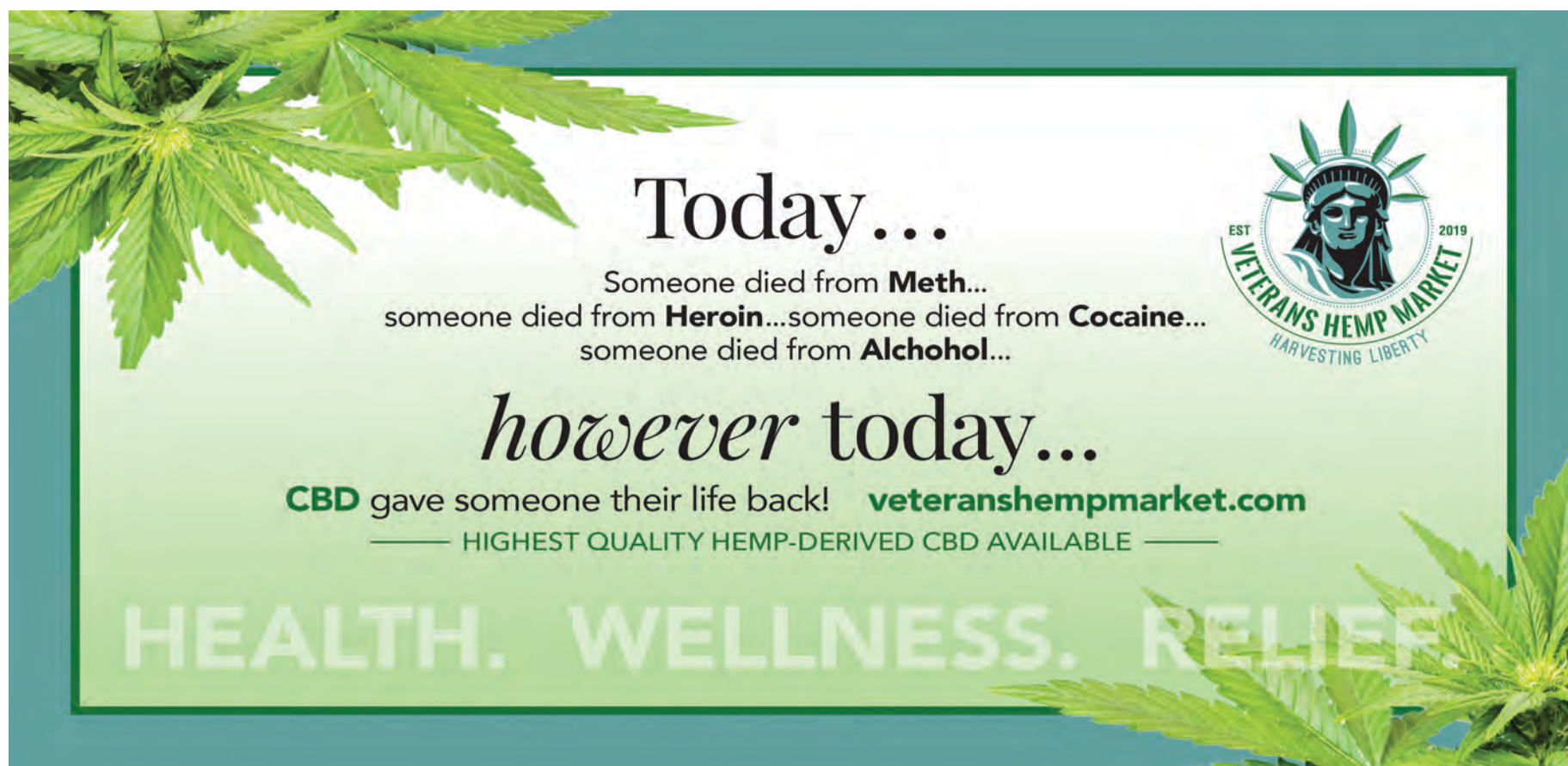
all genres, and now people can stream their shows, or put them up on websites to reach a larger audience. Amy Modesti and Art, Ralph, and Liam from Radioradio have been great at promoting local music.

**RRX:** Here is where you answer the question I didn't ask. Did all of the Decadent Royals have their proper pedigrees? When you played in 1313 Mockingbird Lane, did you ever find that actual address anywhere other than TV? Enlighten, educate, emote – the floor is yours.

**OPC:** Every member of The Decadent Royals had a Ph.D in swagger! We were very fortunate to have played in that group, and it's still some of my favorite memories. Playing in 1313 Mockingbird Lane was a crash

course in touring, gigging, and life in a band for me. I was lucky to witness first hand how much "behind the scenes" work that Kim and Dave did to make that band. The Decadent Royals would have never played our first gig were it not for the behind the scenes work that Norman Kee did, and later when we did our records, Gene Sennes (the drummer of love) was the driving force to get us in the studio and record. Norman and I booked the gigs, Chris Felts did most of our flyer posting, and we all wrote the songs. Now, as a drummer in The Chris Busone band, I have it easy, because Chris writes, books, promotes, and directs the whole show. I just have to show up with my drums!

I'm very lucky to live this life.



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# Observations and Ramblings of a Cranky Old Guy

By Jeff Spaulding

**H**owdy hi, howdy ho, it's that cranky old guy from the radio (and anyone who may know about my broadcasting background might pick up on that clue).

Oh, and confidential to Jason, you're right on target son.

We got nice feedback on our last article about "One Hit Wonders," that made me think it's never too early for "Part Two."

Besides, I need to focus more on great music before we're attacked by the annual wave of Christm...I mean holiday music.

Don't get me wrong (annual rant), I love the ho ho holidays as much as the next guy (person?), but MY enjoyment of holiday music starts Thanksgiving weekend, and build up slowly to Christmas.

Just personal taste.

And my taste is a WIDE playlist, with songs like NO ONE plays anymore.

Moving on.

So, let's do an "instant replay" to add to the list of the greatest

songs in modern music history, songs by a band, duo, solo, and/or novelty act that are so burned in our brain we have a bodily function attack each time we hear them.

One last bit before we resume the list, and while some listeners find it annoying, radio people (especially us old farts who are children of not CHR, but HARD CORE TOP 40 RADIO (baby!), LOVE something called "talking up to the post," where the disc jockey (proper term in this case) rambles on over the start of a record and stops talking AT THE EXACT MOMENT the vocals start.

Speaking from personal experience, if executed right, it can create a feeling of a thousand wedding nights in one instant (use your imagination on that one).

I have many favorites to "talk up," but real close to the top is the Bell Biv DeVoe classic, "Poison"

Just thinking of it gives me the tingles..

Okay, now the list.

**1958 The Monotones "The**

**Book of Love"**

Simple lyrics, not the best harmony, yet that vocal bass hook to start it off makes it so memorable.

**1959 The Mystics "Hushabye"**

Written by Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman, rock and roll based on a childhood lullaby.

**1961 Bruce Channel "Hey Baby"**

A kick ass drum beat AND piano beat, and the SO influential harmonica stylings of Delbert McClinton.

**1968 Iron Butterfly "In A Gadda Da Vida"**

Where do I start? The single is a killer.....but the ALBUM version? The organ, the WTF lyrics, that riff...BOMP BOMP BOMP BOMP BOMP...BOMP..BOMP BOMP BOMP..and repeat..

**1970 Brewer and Shipley "One Toke Over The Line"**

Really? A Top 40 song that references killer dope? But NOTHING beats the "cover" by Lawrence Welk.

Anna one, anna two...

**1972 Billy Paul "Me and Mrs. Jones."**

To me, all soul ballads are sexy, but THIS is the motherlode, and face it, haven't we ALL had a Mrs. Jones (or Mr. Jones in some cases) in our lives at one time? I got my hand up...

**1988 Rob Base "It Takes Two."**

If I go back to my shadowy past as a Top 40 DJ in the 80's, BY FAR the most requested song

by listeners (hey, kids GOT- TA know about James Brown SOMEHOW!)

**1988 Bobby McFerrin "Don't Worry Be Happy"**

Cute song, nice video, and Robin Williams, check please.

**1992 Sir Mix-A-Lot "Baby Got Back"**

Even all these years later, ANYONE says the words, "I like big butts, " EVERYONE ELSE will say "and I cannot lie!"

**1997 Aqua "Barbie Girl"**

Instant hook, BUT the most annoying song by a Europop group since the Tee Set and "Ma Belle Amie"

**2003 The Darkness "I Believe in a Thing Called Love"**

Deep Purple called and they want their music back.

**2005 Daniel Powter "Bad Day"**

It only became a hit because it was played to everyone kicked off "American Idol."

As for "one hit wonder" songs in this past decade, alas my advancing age (and a lack of experience at a music radio station) has given me a case of the "ehs", so let's leave it on an up note.

Wanna play? Contact us and make suggestions, maybe we will include it in a future issue.

Lastly, 2019 got us off to a great start, but 2020 (to coin a phrase) will shock and awe you! #xmarksthespot

Thanks for listening.

Be hearing you!

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# Peggy Apple (Cont.)

*Continued from Page 19*

their first tour of BOY, and most of the artists that were appearing in town would stop by to chat on the air). I don't think I hear any of that today on most stations.

I can't even imagine how it must feel with the instantaneous responses today from all the different social platforms and texting. It must be so rewarding to have that kind of instant connection with your listeners.

**RRX:** One of the biggest changes today in music listening is the streaming aspect, like iTunes and Spotify. People can curate their own playlists, and sometimes those lists rival the average rotation on a corporate "terrestrial" radio station. What are people missing when they DIY their own soundtracks?

**PA:** Everyone has their own private soundtracks and it is fun putting it all together, but it's not radio. With radio you get the knowledge of WHAT you are listening to. Who wrote this? Who is playing on it? How did the artist come up with this? The stories!!!" That experience has faded.... Long gone are the days of sitting around with friends and listening to an entire album (vinyl), reading liner notes and knowing who is playing what and who produced the album, etc... all important parts of the music. Also reading lyrics and just immersing yourself in the whole album. The artwork too. That is what they are missing.

**RRX:** Would you come back to radio, if you could do it right now, with all of newly found freedom that's out there for things like podcasting, or even the "extraterrestrial" online radio stations, like Radioradiox.com? What would entice you, and what would stop you?

**PA:** I do not think I could go back to commercial (terrestrial radio), The commercials drive me nuts and I would feel like I have a strait jacket on. I am being totally realistic here, who would hire me? It's a money making game now and not that I think making money is bad, but at this stage of my life I like the idea of combining making money with doing something I truly love and I love the freedom of playing music that I truly believe in. You just don't have that freedom on commercial stations. Now an extraterrestrial station is a different story, a yes to that.

I have definitely played around with the idea of podcasting with the focus of keeping some excellent unknown artists alive. Truth be told, I believe what Radioradiox is doing is phenomenal. The dedication and hard work to pull this kind of radio off is admirable. I could see myself at home at an online station.

**RRX:** This is where you can answer the question I didn't ask. Any greetings and salutations to anyone you always wanted to give spotlight to? Enlighten, educate, emote – the floor is yours.

**PA:** Well, I need to pay homage to Sarge Blotto and all the tremendous contributions he made to the Albany Music and ART scene...Greg and his wife, Sara, gave their hearts and souls to keep local musicians going. The area lost a huge supporter and lover of the local music scene. Just a great guy. There are so many unsung heroes still working hard to keep local music alive.

There is always so much more to expound on. Totally believe there should be educational music history classes focusing on artists from the last four decades. Would love to work on that and at the moment I am starting to

outline working on a book of stories on the history of the early Q-104 days and the music scene.

Bottom line, there is a ton a great music out there from the past, present and the future. Radio is not dead - something I patiently reply to my 25 year son, who teases me about my past spinning days and my passion for the medium.

Radio is just evolving and re-defining itself. Thanks for the remembering a truly legendary radio station in our region and please continue keeping great RADIO alive.... Rock on!



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# Going to the Kitchen for Skin Care

By Sassy Auburn

**T**aking care of your skin can be expensive. Drug stores, retail stores and high end department stores are all trying to get your business with up and coming anti-aging products and ingredients. Some companies insist they have the golden ticket. They have created the magic potion that will stop time. And unfortunately for many people, they fall for all the hype and glory. When people ask, I tell them that not all skin care claims are true. Not to mention, some of the ingredients in the best products can be found right in your kitchen!

Being a skincare “mix master” does take a few things. You need the ingredients, of course, but you also need some recipes and a little confidence. Honestly, this is where Pinterest can be your friend. There are a lot of different ideas on there. And not just for your use but for gifts too. Make a trip to the grocery store first and grab some of these things to have close by to take care of your skin in a healthy, inexpensive way:

**Raw Honey** Look it up—you will see that honey has been healing cuts and wounds before we were all born. You gotta love those bees! An amazing fact about honey too is that it never spoils. It may get old & thick but it will always be good. When wrinkles occur, it happens



because the skin is dry (with minor, almost invisible cracks). Honey repairs the cracks naturally with its healing properties. It is also a great ingredient in facial and body cleansers to help remove dirt and makeup gently while locking in natural moisture. Raw honey is the best because it is in its most natural form. Raw, local honey is the freshest and

can help your skin be resistant to allergens in your area.

**Coffee** Everyone knows that people turn to coffee for a wake-up fix when you need a boost. We can thank the caffeine in coffee’s oils for that. That caffeine can also be useful to give your skin a boost in the morning as well. Mix in a bit of instant coffee or super-fine used coffee grounds (espresso grind is the best) into your regular cleanser or as an added ingredient to your homemade face wash to stimulate the cells, encourage blood circulation and wake up your skin. If you have used coffee grounds from

your morning pot left over (no flavors), let them dry out on a paper towel and grind them down a bit finer to add to your regular body wash. This awakening scent will help exfoliate you from head to toe while the caffeine gets the blood pumping. Confide

**Vitamin E Oil** This little gem is great for so many things, but at the same time it needs to be used with care. Make sure you find pure Vitamin E—either in capsules or a bottle—and a few drops in your regular products to give you extra moisture and block damaging free radicals. Combining it with vitamin C can also





help lighten sun damage. Vitamin E is also a must have for home-made lip balms & lip scrubs.

**Unsweetened Lemonade Packets** An odd one, huh? Well it is. But the benefits are worth it. Sometime coating your finger in Vitamin E and dipping it into unsweetened lemonade can make a mixture to lighten up dark circles around the eyes. Just don't use too much... it can cause your eyes to burn. Adding a pinch to your daily face moisturizer can help brighten your skin with a nice, natural scent.

**Brown Sugar** This tasty treat isn't just for baking anymore. The coarseness of the sugar works as a great exfoliator from head to toe. It's a must have for lip exfoliating when mixed with a nourishing oil or shea butter. Add

to your favorite body wash during your shower to tone and rid your skin of dead skin cells. Mix the brown sugar with your body wash, some instant coffee, Vitamin E AND raw honey for a super hydrating, healing cleanser.

**Coconut Oil** This is the oil that is changing the glamour industry. Coconut oil melts as soon as it gets above your body's core temperature which is what makes it a great all-over body moisturizer. For your feet, mix coconut oil can with a drop of peppermint oil to soothe & moisturize feet. It can also be used straight out of the jar to remove stubborn eye makeup too. In the fall/winter, mix some coconut oil into an unscented body lotion with a bit of cinnamon, cloves, a drop of orange extract for extra moisture

with seasonal scent.

There are so many other ingredients out there that are perfect to help your skin. Check into other things like fresh fruits & juices as well as different oils & spices that can also be beneficial to your skincare routine. Don't be afraid to create different items for yourself as well as some nice home-made treats for the holidays.

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